



Update on Required Use of Assist School Planning Template:

New Information:

The use of the ASSIST template for the submission of the Indiana School Improvement Plan for the 2015-2016 submission is optional.

Title I Focus and Priority Schools who wish to continue with the option to use the Indiana School Improvement Plan template through ASSIST will be given funds, access for a year, and support to do so through the following quick opt-in application. (Information link and application link) Applications must be received by January 8, 2016.

Any other school that was trained, and has already begun to use the template will be given free continued access for the template until February 1, 2016.

Any school that was trained, and has not already begun to use the template but would like the option to submit using the format, may do so, so long as it is completed by February 1, 2016.

This opportunity is available because AdvancED is an organization committed to helping all schools improve, and as such AdvancED has graciously offered to provide **all** Indiana schools and districts access to the resources **free of charge** through February 1, 2016. During this time, you will have unlimited access to administer stakeholder surveys, conduct a needs assessment, measure and quantify student engagement, as well as to develop and submit a streamlined INSIP. Every principal, superintendent and primary contact has been granted access to their institution's accounts and can get started today. With this in mind, a school that is not a Title I Focus and Priority school will be able to complete the INSIP through ASSIST and upload through DOE Online, if this work is completed by February 1, and a paper copy is uploaded by the March 1 due date for this year's submission.

Non-Title I Focus and Priority schools and districts that may be interested in using these tools beyond February 1, 2016 can do so by contacting AdvancED at contactus@advanc-ed.org or 888.413.3669

Background Information-Why has this opportunity to use ASSIST changed so much?

Since 2013, the Indiana Department of Education has been working to provide a user-friendly, no cost tool for school improvement planning. In 2014, the IDOE sought and received a sole source agreement for AdvancED Adaptive System of School Improvement Support Tools™ (ASSIST™) and began a small cohort. Last year, that cohort grew to 125 schools, and through both years, additional enhancements were made to the ASSIST template to refine how it could best work for Indiana.

After successful pilot projects, the IDOE was prepared to provide the ASSIST tool to all Indiana schools and standardize the School Improvement Plan while allowing for data to be shared with all schools in a useful manner. To that end, the IDOE launched the initiative state-wide and offered the tool free of charge to all schools with an expectation of moving to this template for state reporting.

However, after feedback from the field, other state agencies, and the State Board of Education it became apparent to the Department that we needed to scale back the full launch of the requirement of ASSIST for all schools, and narrowed it down to only the remaining Focus and Priority schools. This was communicated on October 27, 2015 via the DOE Dialogue.

Subsequently, the narrowed down approach was halted in several ways:

- The funding source and contract for ASSIST was denied by the State Budget Agency
- The State Board of Education failed to support the Data Reporting Committee recommendation of the use for ASSIST for only the Focus and Priority schools

The IDOE certainly understands the frustrations that you may have because we will not be able to move forward with our agreement with AdvancED to provide all schools and districts access to the AdvancED template and the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool as originally planned and communicated. We apologize for the confusion and inconvenience this has caused educators across the state, as well as AdvancED.

We appreciate your patience, flexibility, and feedback as we have worked through many issues and obstacles during the past few months. We know our students benefit when we have an intentional, focused, data-driven plan for school improvement. The IDOE stands ready to help support our schools and educators as we move forward with this expanded project and plan for the 2016-17 school year.